the General Manager of the Unit has admitted the clinkering and damaging of some of the retorts due to which the increase in demand of the gas could not be made with the existing retort benches?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) The main products of low temperature carbonisation plant are, gas and coke. Tar and other chemicals like ammonium sulphate, phenols cresols, xylenols etc. are termed as by-products.

(b) The bench distillation section of the tar distillation plant is under commissing. The bench distillation section could not be commissioned earlier because of non-avlaiability of sufficient steam due to low capacity operation of the plant on account of restricted off-take of gas.

(c) The ammonium sulphate section could not be commissioned due to development of leakage in the pipe line.

(d) to (f) Coal India Limited has reported that no damage of permanent nature had been noticed in retort benches No. 1 & 2. Only clinker formation at the bottom portion of some retorts was taking place resulting in drop in productivity. Some of the retorts have already been creaned out and put back into normal operation and other retors are under the process of cleaning of clinkers.

Expanding and Improving use of coal

715. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the total outlay proposed in each year of the Eighth Five Year Plan period on research and development for the purpose of expanding and improving the use of coal as a source of energy; and

(b) whether Government have any proposal to increae such outlays serveral fold in view of the foreign exchange saving potential of domestic coal development programmes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) A total capital outlay of Rs. 87 crores had been envisaged during the Eighth Plan period (1992-97) on various applied Research and Development activities covering areas like production, productivity and safety, coal beneficiation, coal utilisation, environment and ecology etc.

During the first three years of the Eighth Plan (1992-95), Research and development projects with an outlay of about Rs. 55 crores have been sanctioned/taken up. For the balance two years of the Plan period, the allocation depends on the Annual Plan exercises based on the status of various Research & Development schemes taken up/proposed.

Mobile hospitals in the coalfields

716. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have introduced mobile hospitals in the Coalfields to provide emergency medical help to its employees;

(b) if so, the Coalfields of different States where such a system has been introduced; and

(c) the detailed norms and guidelines introduced therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Mobile Clinics have been introduced in Eastern Coalfields Ltd. (West Bengal, Bihar), Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. (Bihar & West Bengal),

Western Coalfields Ltd. (Maharashtr & Madhya Pradesh), South Easterna Coalfields Ltd. (Madhya Pradesh), North Eastern Coalfields (Assam), and Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (Orissa).

(c) The Mobile Clinics have been introduced in the Coal Companies to quickly provide necessary medical help to the employees involved in accidents in the coal mines situated at far flung areas from companies' headquarters.

Supply of coal Containing ash

717. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minster of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) why coal containing 40—45 per cent ash is being supplied to National Thermal Power Corporation

(b) whether it is a fact that there is no regular and consistent supply of coal even of this variety to NTPC power houses;

(c) why appropriate mining method is not being adopted to reduce the mixture of parting band and other foreign material in thick seam of open cast mining in various fields to reduce the ash percentage of coal, atleast to power houses in national interest; and

(d) whether the Coal Ministry is aware of the economic penalty, the country is paying on account of supply of inferior variety of coal to our power houses and industires and if so, what action Government is contemplating to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) Thermal Power stations of National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd. (NTPC) are linked to specific coal mines and their boilers are also designed for using such grades of coal as being produced from the linked mines. Besides, there is a coal supply agreement between NTPC and Coal India Limited which covers all essential parameters including quantity and quality of supplies. Hence the question of either supply of high ash coal or that of irregular supplies does not arise.

(c) and (d) In mechanised open cast mining, the mine plan generaly provides for separation of bands which are thick enough to be extracted separately depending on the bucket size of the machine, thickness of the band, thickness of the coal seam and other related geo-mining parameters. In large scale operations in opencast mining bands which are erratic, thin and inconsistent get excavated along with coal . Manual segregation of such band/stone/shale pieces is not feasible. The overall quality can be improved only by beneficiation. As per accepted policy all coals to be supplied to new power stations located over 1000 kms. away from the source should be beneficiated. Since consuming power stations would be the main beneficiaries of benefits accruing from washed coal they should come forward and agree to pay washing charges. As a step forward in this direction, Government has sanctioned three projects for setting up of non-coking coal washeries at Bina (Singrauli Coalfield), Piparwar (North Karanpura Coalfied) and Kalinga (Talcher Coalfield). In order to further promote coal washing on large scale private promoters are also being invited to set up washeries under "Build-Own-Operate" scheme.

Performance of coal companies

718. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reviewed the performance of various coal companies;